One Thousand Miles by BCI603

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Summary: If you told El two years ago that she would be sitting in her room, doing absolutely nothing with her life at twenty three years old- you'd be absolutely correct. Mileven Week day 1!

One Thousand Miles

A little late but it's still the first day! I'm hoping you can count this as long distance- it's a reunion from that, at least XD.

December 1994
University Chicago

If you told El two years ago that she would be sitting in her room, doing absolutely nothing with her life at twenty three years old- you'd be absolutely correct. The party graduated college last year and since then they've all gotten jobs around Hawkins- her included- but Mike's sucked the most, because every couple months he had to leave down for up to two to six weeks at a time and they hated it.

Christmas was two weeks away and Mike's already been gone for three, and he isn't even sure he'll be home for *New Years* and it terrified her because the longest he's been gone is three week- three or more was always a possibility but he worked on machines (biomedical engineering) at hospitals and he was one of the best, so Hawkins hospital sent him out to others. He was nearly a thousand miles away in Massachusetts.

Okay, El was exaggerating when she said she was doing nothing with her life- she's a language teacher at Hawkins elementary and she loves it, but other than that she does nothing other than mope when Mike's gone, and her friends are quick to call her out on it.

"You guys know how much we hate being apart." El grumbled to them two weeks later, sipping her beer. "We haven't been away from each other this long since…" She waved her hand and they knew what she meant. The three hundred and fifty three days apart.

"El can you open this for me?" Dustin asked, and she flicked her fingers towards him and the bottle top came off his beer and landed on top of his hat. "Thank ya much." El sighed pitifully.

"This is gonna be the first Christmas he isn't home." Holly said quietly from her spot curled up in an armchair. El looked over, surprised.

The thirteen year old hadn't made a sound in a while and she'd honestly forgot she was there. The adults- funny how even at twenty-three, adults themselves, they called their parents and friends parents *the adults* - were in the Hopper's dining room talking while their kids sat all around the living room.

"Yeah, it sucks." Nancy agreed. "It's a tradition for him to jump on me on Christmas morning- one that I hate, but I'm gonna miss it in the morning." El chuckled quietly at that.

"When's the last time you talked to him?" Will asked.

"Two days ago." She said, taking another sip.

"Two *days* ?"

"Yeah, the power lines are down because of a snowstorm." She told them. "Mike had just finished telling me when the phone went out, and I visited him in the void and figured it out."

"That sucks." She nodded.

"Yeah…"

The phone rang loudly in the kitchen and Hopper stood up to get it. El blocked him out, laying her head back on the couch to look up at the ceiling. After a few minutes, Hoppers faced moved into her line of vision.

"I'll be back, kid, I got a call at the station." She nodded. "I'll try not to be too long." He gave her a smile and she smiled back.

"Be careful, dad, love you."

"Love you too."

He left quickly, waving goodbye to those in the kitchen, before climbing in his blazer and taking off. Only, he wasn't going to the station. Police station, that is, but the bus station- where a certain someone had a lot of explaining to do. He slowed to a stop next to the tall figure and unlocked the door.

"Hello, beanpole." He greeted as Mike shut the door quickly. Mike rubbed his hands together and blew into them before grinning at Hopper.

"Hey, Hop."

"Care to explain how you got here?"

"Yeah, uh… So, not long after the power lines fell, the storm was over and the road was cleared up, so I rented a car and drove about fifteen hours to Detroit- it would've taken less time but you know, traffic. I manage to find a sketchy motel for the night and then at about seven, I got up and drove about nine hours to Chicago and stopped for like an hour to eat and took the car to the rental place and rode the bus here. And now here we are." Mike kept grinning at him.

"You're a determined little shit, huh, Wheeler?"

"I miss her." Mike said, shrugging. "I want to see her. Oh, and uh, we need to talk about something…"

Twenty minutes later, an *excited* Hopper and jittery Mike arrived back at the house.

"Try and be very quiet, we're gonna surprise her." Hopper told him. Mike made a face like *duh* and Hopper snorted. Hopper opened the door and the two walked in, Mike surprisingly being quiet. Those in the kitchen looked towards the door and Karen's eyes widened at the sight of her son, and then narrowed at his lack of warm clothing. Mike held up a finger to his lips and took his scarf and jacket off, hanging it on the coat hanger and toed off his shoes.

"That was pretty quick, dad." El called. Mike sighed quietly, having missed her voice over the two days. "I figured you'd be out until late."

"Yeah, I figured it'd take longer too." He replied, giving Mike a look. Hopper hung his coat up too and walked into the living room and squeezed El's shoulders. "I picked you up a surprise on my way back. It's in the entryway." She raised an eyebrow but nodded and got up. Hopper leaned against the wall where he could see them perfectly. She scratched her head and looked towards the kitchen at everyone

in there and saw them looking at her. She looked towards the door and literally *screamed* at the top of her lungs, covering her mouth with her hands. Mike seemed to freeze upon seeing her, not knowing how to speak at how beautiful she looked.

"What's wrong, El?" Max asked from the living room. El looked at them for a second, tears gathering at the corner of her eyes, before holding her arms out and jumping at him with a quiet sob. He snapped out of it just in time to catch her, hugging her back just as tightly as her legs wrapped around his waist.

"How are you home?" She cried. "I thought- You said-"

"I know. I wanted to surprise you." He whispered. She pulled back just enough to kiss him sweetly, her hands on either side of his face. "I missed you so much, I love you." He said, resting his forehead against hers.

"I missed you too. I love *you* ." She smiled wide, hugging him again before letting her legs fall and releasing him. She grabbed his hands and went to pull him further into the house but he stopped her.

"El, um, I uh. I just wanted to tell you that you're beautiful and I love you. I love you *so* much I can't even put it into words."

"A love confession to make up for not telling her he's coming home." Dustin snorted and Will smacked him. Mike glared at them but looked back at El.

"Being away from you is the worst thing I've ever had to face, and I don't plan to ever be away from you again." She smiled at him. "I, uh, I drove literally twenty-four hours to get home to you today, and while in Massachusetts, I realized something. Honestly, I've known this for a long time, but it's time I did something about it." He let go of one of her hands and reached into his back pocket. "I asked Hopper for permission on the way over, so, Jane Eleanor Hopper," He took the box out of his pocket and sank to one knee, managing to open the box with one hand, and held it up to her, "Will you marry me?" Her mouth dropped open slightly in a slightly delayed reaction.

"Seriously?" She whispered. He nodded and she squealed a little,

doing a little dance and nodded, "Yes, yes, yes! Jesus, finally!" He let out a laugh and put the ring on her finger before she threw herself at him again, hugging him tightly. She kissed him and wiped her eyes, looking at the ring without letting him go. "I love it, and I love you."He smiled wide and kissed her forehead, pulling her close.

"I love you too."